

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously presented) A method of processing a telephone call prior to connecting the telephone call, comprising:

querying a database containing information about a telephone number of the telephone call prior to connecting the telephone call; and

determining information about the telephone number including whether the telephone number has been ported, and whether the telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising blocking the telephone call if it is determined that the telephone number has been ported.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the call from being connected to the telephone number.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the telephone call to an operator.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing a billing method for the telephone call.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone call is a collect call.
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the collect call is blocked.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone call is a bill-to-third-party call.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the bill-to-third-party call is blocked.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing an indicator in a call detail record associated with the telephone call if it is determined that the telephone number has been ported.
11. (Currently amended) A method for determining billability of a telephone call, comprising:
 - querying a database identifying information relating to area codes and office exchange numbers prior to connection of the telephone call; [[and]]
 - determining from the information, prior to connecting the telephone call, whether an originating carrier originating the telephone call has a billing relationship with a terminating carrier terminating the telephone call; and
 - determining from the information, prior to connecting the telephone call, whether the terminating carrier is a switchless reseller.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the billing relationship is direct.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the billing relationship is indirect.
14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the telephone call is a collect call.
15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the telephone call is a bill-to-third-party call.
16. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising blocking the telephone call if it is determined that the originating carrier does not have a billing relationship with the terminating carrier.
17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the call from being connected to the telephone number.
18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the telephone call to an operator.
19. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing a billing method for the telephone call.
20. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising providing an indicator in a call detail record associated with the telephone call if it is determined that the originating carrier does not have a billing relationship with the terminating carrier.

21. (Original) A method for detecting subscriber fraud related to a collect telephone call associated with a dialed telephone number, comprising:

performing a reverse directory lookup query in a database;

identifying dialed telephone number listing information associated with the dialed telephone number;

comparing the dialed telephone number listing information to listing information including associated telephone numbers to identify other telephone numbers associated with the dialed telephone number listing information; and

querying a payment information database using the other telephone numbers to determine if any of the other telephone numbers are associated with a past history of at least one of bad debt, unbillability, and fraud.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising initiating fraud prevention activity.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the fraud prevention activity includes blocking the collect call.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the collect call from being connected to the dialed telephone number.

25. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the collect call to an operator.

26. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the collect call.

27. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the listing information includes a listed address.

28. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the listing information includes a listed name.

29. (Original) A method for detecting subscriber fraud related to a bill-to-third-party telephone call associated with a billing telephone number, comprising:

performing a reverse directory lookup query of the billing telephone number in a database;

identifying bill-to listing information associated with the billing telephone number;

comparing the bill-to listing information in said query to listing information including associated telephone numbers to identify other telephone numbers associated with the bill-to listing information; and

querying a payment information database using the other telephone numbers to determine if any of the other numbers are associated with a past history of at least one of bad debt, unbillability, and fraud.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising initiating fraud prevention activity.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the fraud prevention activity includes blocking the bill-to-third-party telephone call.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the bill-to-third-party telephone call from being connected.

33. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the bill-to-third-party telephone call to an operator.

34. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the bill-to-third-party call.

35. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the bill-to listing information includes a listed address.

36. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the bill-to listing information includes a listed name.

37. (Original) A method of processing a telephone call, comprising:
establishing a dialed telephone number for the telephone call;
comparing the dialed telephone number to an allowed list containing allowed telephone numbers and allowed names to determine if the dialed telephone number is contained in the allowed list;

preventing the telephone call from being connected if the dialed telephone number is not contained in the allowed list;

performing a reverse directory lookup query in a database to determine a listed name associated with the dialed telephone number;

comparing the listed name to the allowed list to determine if the listed name is contained in the allowed list; and

preventing the telephone call from being connected if the listed name is not contained in the allowed list.

38. (Previously presented) The call processing method of claim 37, wherein the allowed list also includes allowed addresses, the method further comprising:

determining a listed address associated with the dialed telephone number;

comparing the listed address to the allowed list to determine if the listed address is contained in the allowed list; and

blocking the telephone call from being connected if the listed address is not contained in the allowed list.

39. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the telephone call from being connected to the dialed telephone number.

40. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the telephone call to an operator.

41. (Original) A method of providing credit information to a provider of collect call services prior to connection of a collect call associated with a dialed number, comprising:

performing a reverse directory lookup query in a directory assistance database;
identifying listing information associated with the dialed number;
querying a credit reporting database using the listing information to retrieve credit information related to the listing information; and
analyzing the credit information to determine whether the collect call should be connected.

42. (Canceled)

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, further comprising determining a credit limit associated with the collect call.

44. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, further comprising blocking the collect call if analysis of the credit information indicates bad credit is associated with the listing information.

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the collect call from being connected to the dialed number.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the collect call to an operator.

47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the collect call.

48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein the credit information is used to establish a credit limit for the collect call.

49. (Previously presented) A method of providing credit information to a provider of collect call services prior to connection of a collect call associated with a dialed number, comprising:

identifying listing information associated with the dialed number;

querying a credit reporting database using the listing information to retrieve credit information related to the listing information; and

analyzing the credit information to determine whether the collect call should be connected, wherein the listing information includes a listed address.

50. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[42]]~~ 49, wherein the listing information includes a listed name.

51. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[42]]~~ 49, wherein the credit information includes a credit score.

52. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[42]]~~ 49, wherein the credit information includes credit history information.

53. (Canceled)

54. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, further comprising determining a credit limit associated with the bill-to-third-party call.

55. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein said credit information is used to establish a credit limit for the bill-to-third-party call.

56. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, further comprising blocking the bill-to-third-party call if analysis of the credit information indicates that bad credit is associated with the listing information.

57. (Original) The method of claim 56, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the bill-to-third-party call from being connected.

58. (Previously presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the bill-to-third-party call to an operator.

59. (Original) The method of claim 56, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the bill-to-third-party call.

60. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the credit information is used to establish a credit limit for the bill-to-third-party call.

61. (Previously presented) A method of providing credit information to a provider of bill-to-third-party call services prior to connection of a bill-to-third-party call, the bill-to-third-party call associated with a bill-to telephone number, the method comprising:

performing a reverse directory lookup query in a database;

identifying listing information associated with the bill-to number;

querying a credit reporting database using the listing information to retrieve credit information related to the listing information; and

analyzing the credit information to determine whether the bill-to-third-party call should be connected, wherein the listing information includes a listed address.

62. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the listing information includes a listed name.

63. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the credit information includes a credit score.

64. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the credit information includes credit history information.

65. (Currently amended) A method for processing a telephone call prior to connecting the call, the method[[,]] comprising:

identifying a carrier associated with a telephone number; and

querying a database associated with the carrier, the database containing telephone numbers associated with switchless resellers, using the telephone number to determine if the telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller.

66. (Original) The method of claim 65, further comprising blocking the telephone call if the telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller.

67. (Original) The method of claim 66, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing telephone call from being connected.

68. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the telephone call to an operator.

69. (Original) The method of claim 66, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the telephone call.

70. (Currently amended) A method of processing a telephone call[[,]] prior to connecting the call, the method comprising:

identifying a carrier associated with a dialed telephone number;

querying a database containing telephone numbers using the dialed telephone number to determine if the carrier services the dialed telephone number; and

determining that the dialed telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller if the carrier does not service the dialed telephone number.

71. (Original) The call processing method of claim 70, further comprising blocking the telephone call if the dialed telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller.

72. (Original) The method of claim 71, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the telephone call from being connected.

73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the telephone call to an operator.

74. (Original) The method of claim 71, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the telephone call.

75. (Original) The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database is a customer service database.

76. (Original) The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the customer service database is belongs to the carrier.

77. (Original) The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database contains service records.

78. (Original) The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database belongs to the carrier.

79. (Original) The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database is a directory assistance database.

80. (Currently amended) A method of processing a telephone call[[,]] prior to connecting the call comprising:

identifying a carrier associated with a dialed telephone number;

determining if the carrier services the dialed telephone number; and

determining that the dialed telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller if the carrier does not service the dialed telephone number.

81. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising sending a return message indicating that the originating carrier does not have a billing relationship with the terminating carrier, if it is determined that the originating carrier originating the telephone call does not have a billing relationship with the terminating carrier.

82. (Previously presented)The method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising sending a return message indicating that the terminating carrier is a switchless reseller, if it is determined that the terminating carrier is a switchless reseller.